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SF 501 Introduction to Spiritual Formation

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SF 501 Introduction to Spiritual Formation
Spring, 2004 1:00-2:15 Tu/Tr
Dr. Reg Johnson

I. Course Description: A survey that examines the theological and practical dimensions of the spiritual life. Lectures, class discussions and small-group disciplines are used. Students are encouraged to enrich their own personal spiritual life and are given guidelines for engaging in a ministry of spiritual formation in the local church.

II. Course Objectives:

- A. Participants are expected to acquire knowledge about the...
 - means by which we open our lives to God's love;
 - seasons through which we grow;
 - community in which we live; and
 - approaches to spirituality by which we can be nourished.
- B. Participants are expected to develop skills in...
 - identifying growth points in the spiritual life;
 - discovering their own "inner story";
 - furnishing resources, and
 - designing strategies for intentional spiritual formation in a congregation.
- C. Participants are encouraged to deepen their relationship with Christ by...
 - living in a covenant community;
 - using the means of grace;
 - engaging in formative ("spiritual") reading;
 - keeping a record of their experiences with the Lord in a spiritual journal;
 - exploring additional material on themes or resources dealt with in class;
 - participating in formative discussions in their small groups;
 - appreciating the stories of faith which are part of their classmates' journeys; and
 - continuing to formulate a personal theology for spiritual formation.

III. Texts

- Richard Foster, A Celebration of Discipline,
or, if you've read Foster previously,
Marjorie Thompson, Soul Feast
- Reginald Johnson, Your Personality and the Spiritual Life &
- Reginald Johnson, Learning to Pray Again Compact Discs
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together
- Joyce Huggett, Listening to God
- Steve Harper, Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition

Participants will also purchase a class packet at Cokesbury Book store. This material consists of "handouts" and worksheets for use in class.

IV. Class Structure

SF 501 will be structured as a "covenant community". This is an acknowledgment that spiritual formation takes place within the context of the Christian community. Each covenant group shall utilize common disciplines and weekly meetings. In the initial meetings, group members will share from their own spiritual journeys. In phase two, they will share from reflective exercises from the "Learning to Pray Again" CDs, and in the latter part of the semester the small groups will share from their journal entries of the previous week. Some or all of the following questions of "examen" will guide those meetings in the final phase of the course.

- How did I meet God in scripture this week?
- How did I meet God in daily life this week? (joys, sorrows, anxieties, celebrations)
- How did I meet God in other people this week? (spiritual gifts, disagreements, etc.)
- How did I close off to God this week? When was I most open?

Each of these group sessions will end in prayer. Depending upon the time available, it may be a period of silent prayer, sometimes one member may be invited to pray for the group as a whole, and at other times there may be time for group "conversational prayer."

V. Grading System

Grading will be on the basis of a "contract". Participants will decide, in the light of present commitments, which grade will be their goal. Grades are not awarded on the basis of the contract made, but upon the quality of work done at the performance level chosen. For the purpose of assessment, there will be graded elements in the course.

VI. Grade Expectations

For the "C-Level" contract...

- read course texts (20 points)
- work through the course CDs (25 points)
- write a spiritual autobiography (30 points)
- attend class sessions (2 points deducted for unexcused absences)
- achieve a minimum cumulative total of 67 out of 75 points

For the "B-Level" contract...

- fulfill C-Level expectations
- write two essays (worth 30 points each).
- keep a spiritual journal 4 out of 7 days a week. (30 points) and
- achieve a minimum cumulative total of 150 out of 165 points.

For the "A-Level" contract...

- fulfill C and B-level expectations
- present an approved project to the class and project report to the prof (45 points)
- achieve a minimum cumulative total of 180 out of 200 points.

VII. Course Components

Spiritual Autobiography. This 10 - 15 page paper (double-spaced, typed) will relate stories from your life which enable the reader to see the formative experiences which have brought you to this point. The stories are to trace early influences, significant persons, and important "passages" of your life. Not only will you recount the "outer facts" but you will use these pages to also reflect upon their inner meaning as well. Due on March 4.

Essays. These papers will be 3-5 pages in length (double-spaced, typed).

In the *first essay (due on March 25)* you will write about how your personality influences your spirituality (how your own unique temperament is evident in your spiritual "style" and the pattern of your life of prayer and devotion). You will also address and how your spirituality is impacting your personality (how your faithful following of Jesus is leading you to move beyond the comfort zone of your "personality preferences" and to balance in areas where you may have been one-dimensional). Your essay will draw from the appropriate course texts, classroom presentations, as well as other resources that will be library reserve.

In the *second essay (due on April 29)* you will choose some course-related theme (e.g., fasting, contemplation, etc.); issue or idea (e.g., busyness, inner healing, asceticism, etc.); person (e.g., Teresa of Avila, Thomas Merton, Henry Nouwen); or "spiritual classic" (e.g., The Practice of the Presence of God, The Sacrament of the Present Moment, A Serious Call, etc.) for further research. Footnotes (or endnotes) and bibliography will evidence that you have gone beyond class texts in your exploration. If your essay focuses upon a spiritual classic, you will read the classic and use the essay as a place to distil discoveries, insights, and reflections that have resulted from your thoughtful reading of the source. Write cogently and present your material in a concise and well-organized fashion.

Or,

The second essay may take the form of *a report on a one day, personal retreat* that you take during the semester. By "one day" is meant a morning and afternoon, or an afternoon and evening, or an evening and the following morning. The purpose of your retreat is simply to be alone with God. Be open to whatever gifts God wants to give--insights, perspective, direction, or simply refreshment and rest. The report is to be no more than two or three pages in length. Organize your report into three parts:

- (a) What was going on in your life just prior to taking the retreat? In other words, what was the "context" of your retreat?
- (b) Where you go and how did you spend your time? What scriptures, readings or experiences did you process? What surfaced as you prayed?
- (c) Reflect on the meaning of the retreat with regard to "re-entry" into your relationships and responsibilities.

Two points will be deducted for each 24 hour period that a paper is late. Allowances will, of course, be made for medical emergencies or personal crises (e.g., death in the family).

1. The following grading rubric will be used for essays:
 - For "A" level work, the essay clearly and concisely states the thesis, question or theme to be undertaken. It presents its findings in an exemplary fashion, particularly as regards concision and clarity. It draws a powerful conclusion that clearly relates to the theme. It contains no distractive material. It demonstrates clear evidence of deep and substantive reflection. It demonstrates exemplary research and use of sources (except in the case of the retreat report, where outside sources are not required).
 - For "B" level work, the essay: clearly states the thesis, question or issue to be undertaken. It contains few grammatical errors or misspellings. It presents its ideas in a reasonably clear and concise fashion. It draws a substantive conclusion that relates the research to the theme. It contains minimal distractive material. It demonstrates clear evidence of substantive reflection. It demonstrates cautions and substantive research and use of sources.
 - For "C" level work, the essay attempts to clearly state the thesis, theme or question to be undertaken. It contains frequent grammatical errors and/or misspellings. It presents its findings in a fashion that is hard to follow and exhibits too much "subjectivity," i.e., is more of an opinion piece. (Note: allowances are made in the case of the Retreat Report where the assignment includes personal reflection). The essay attempts to conclude in a fashion that relates the findings back to the thesis or theme. It contains significant distractive material. It demonstrates little evidence of substantive reflection. It demonstrates little evidence of substantive research.
 - For "D/F" level work, the essay largely fails to identify a thesis, question or theme. It contains many grammatical errors and/or misspellings. It presents little or no research and is mostly an opinion piece. It draws no meaningful conclusion. It evidences minimal or no evidence of substantive reflection or research.

Spiritual Journal. Journal entries shall be made 4 out of 7 days a week. They will be kept in a separate notebook and handed in for review on the last class period of each month. It will be reviewed in class while you're in small group.

Creative Project. This assignment may take one of two forms.

You may choose an artistic mode (painting, sculpture, poetry, creative writing, photo meditation, original musical composition, etc.) in order to give expression to some aspect of your own spiritual journey. It is expected that the project will be a fresh work.

Or,

You may choose a project that communicates course-related ideas (e.g., lesson plans, sermon manuscript, newsletter articles, overhead transparencies, set of retreat talks, etc.). Your work should not only reflect your personal reflections, but also include appropriate connections with our course content (texts and/or teaching modules).

Important information about the Creative Projects:

- The Project represents a significant course assignment. Those who work at this level are expected to invest *a minimum of ten hours* in the preparation of their project. Some will spend much more time than that.
- Each project will be shared in class at the end of the semester.
- You are to receive approval of your idea before presenting it in class. This idea is due in a written form on March 18^h. This is to include a clear and succinct statement of the purpose of your project as well as the objectives for your presentation to the class.
- In addition to your presentation to the class, you will also submit a report that includes:
 - A log of your time investment.
 - For art-based projects: submit a detailed discussion of the connection between your project and your own spiritual journey;
 - For text-based projects (including power-point presentations) submit a detailed interpretation and or information of how your theme fits with a ministry for spiritual formation.

Grading Criteria for Projects

- Did you spend at least 10 hours in the preparation of the project?
- Was your presentation to the class clear and within the time-frame allowed?
- How well did your written interpretation/discussion of your project integrate course content with personal reflection? Does your project demonstrate a connection between course content and your personal journey?
- How well prepared was your written interpretation/discussion (writing style, spelling, grammar, etc.)?

My Grading Intentions

I will work to grade and return your essays within one week of their submission. I will seek to provide substantive feedback, indicating what you've done well and how you might improve our performance in subsequent assignments. Since your spiritual

autobiography represents a longer assignment and one that I respond to by letter, rather than by a feedback-form, my grading will take between 3 or 4 weeks

Selected Bibliography for Spiritual Formation

General Reference

Jones, Wainwright and Yarnold, *The Study of Christian Spirituality*
Gordon S. Wakefield, *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*
James M. Gordon, *Evangelical Spirituality from the Wesleys to John Stott*
Donald Alexander (ed.), *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*
Owen Chadwick (ed.), *Western Asceticism*

Introductions to the Spiritual Life

Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*
Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*
The Renovation of the Heart
Al Sager, *Gospel Spirituality*
Maxie Dunnam, Alive in Christ: The Dynamic Process of Spiritual Formation
Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*
Henri Nouwen, *Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life*
Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual Life*
Richard Lovelace, *Renewal as a Way of Life: A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth*
Thomas Langford, *Christian Wholeness*
Bruce Demarest, *Satisfy Your Soul*
Elizabeth Canham, *Heart Whispers: Benedictine Wisdom for Today*
Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*,
The Renovation of the Heart
Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water*
Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*
Gerald McDermott, *Seeing God: Twelve Reliable Signs of True Spirituality*
Adrian van Kaam, *The Formative Spirituality Series, Vol. 1-4*,
The Transcendent Self,
On Being Involved: The Rhythm of Involvement and Detachment in Daily Life

Introductions to the Christian "Classics"

Susan Muto, *A Practical Guide to Spiritual Reading*
Urban T. Holmes, *A History of Christian Spirituality*
Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith, Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups

Disciplines of the Spiritual Life

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline
Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*
Donald S. Whitney, *Disciplines for the Christian Life*
Marjorie J. Thompson, Soul Feast
Susan Muto, *Pathways of Spiritual Living*
Bruce Demarest, Satisfy Your Soul
Tracy, Freeborn, Tartaglia and Weigelt, *The Upward Call*
Bob and Michael Benson, *Disciplines for the Inner Life*
Joyce Huggett, *The Joy of Listening to God*
Oswald Chambers, *Christian Disciplines*

James B. Smith, Linda Graybeal, *A Spiritual Formation Workbook: Small-group Resources for Nurturing Christian Growth*.

E. Glenn Hinson, A Serious Call to a Contemplative Lifestyle

Eugene Peterson, *Working the Angles*

Patricia Loring, *Listening Spiritually* (2 Vols.)

Henry Blackaby & Claude King, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*

Prayer

Richard Foster, *Prayer: The Heart's True Home*

Kenneth Leach, *True Prayer*

Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray*

E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer*

George Buttrick, *Prayer*

Maxie Dunnam, *The Workbook of Living Prayer*

The Workbook of Intercessory Prayer

C.S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcom Chiefly on Prayer*

Charles Whiston, *Pray: A Study of Distinctive Christian Praying*

Susan Muto, Adrian van Kaam, *Practicing the Prayer of Presence*

Douglas Steere, *Dimensions of Prayer*

William O. Paulsell, *Rules for Prayer*

W. Bingham Hunter, *The God Who Hears*

John Powell, *He Touched Me*

Peter Wagner, *The Prayer Warrior Series*

Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*

The Ministry of Intercession

S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*

Albert E. Day, *An Autobiography of Prayer*

Lance Webb, *The Art of Personal Prayer*

Joyce Huggett, *The Joy of Listening to God*

Ron DelBene, *The Breath of Life*

Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer*

Dutch Sheets, *Intercessory Prayer*

Tommy Femrite, Elizabeth Alves, Karen Kaufman, *Intercessors*

Jane Vennard, *Praying for Friends and Enemies*

Praying with Body and Soul

Ed Bauman, *Intercessory Prayer*

Jo Kimmel, *Steps to Prayer Power*

Agnes Sanford, *The Healing Light*

Frank Laubach, *Prayer, The Mightiest Force in the World*

William Vaswig, *I Prayed, He Answered*

Dick Eastman, *The Hour that Changes the World*

John Dawson, *Healing America's Wounds*

Terry Teykl, *Your Pastor: Preyed on or Prayed For*

Making Room For Prayer

How to Pray After You've Kicked the Dog

Don Miller, *A Room That's Like a Mountain*

Jill Griffith, *How to Have a Dynamic Church Prayer Ministry*

David Bryant, *Concerts of Prayer*

Creative Approaches for Concerts of Prayer

Steve Hawthorne, Graham Kendrick, *Prayer-Walking: Praying On Site with Insight*

C. Peter Wagner, *Prayer Shield*

(and others in the Prayer Warrior Series)

John B. Magee, *Reality and Prayer*

Wesley Dewel, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*

Walter Wangerin, Jr., *Whole Prayer: Speaking and Listening to God*

Susan Muto, *Meditation in Motion*

Spiritual Reading, Praying the Scriptures, Praying the Psalms

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Meditating on the Word*

Thomas Merton, *Opening the Bible*

Robert Mulholland, *Shaped by the Word*

Thelma Hall, *Too Deep for Words*

Judson Cornwall, *Praying the Scriptures*

Germaine Copeland, *Prayers that Avail Much*

Thomas Merton, *Praying the Psalms*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms, The Prayerbook of the Bible*

Eugene Peterson, *Answering God*

Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms*

Norvene Vest, *Gathered in the Word*

The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, article on “Reading, Spiritual”

Richard Peace, *Contemplative Reading*

Susan Muto, A Practical Guide to Spiritual Reading

The Spiritual (Prayer) Journal

Morton Kelsey, *Adventure Inward*

George Simmons, *Keeping Your Personal Journal*

Richard Foster, *Coming Home, A Prayer Journal*

Spiritual Discernment

Dallas Willard, *In Search of Guidance*

Danny Morris, *Yearning to Know God's Will*

Gordon Smith, *Listening to God in Times of Choice*

Rueben Job, *A Guide to Spiritual Discernment*

John Ackerman, Listening to God: Spiritual Formation in Congregations

Charles Olsen, *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders*

Ernest Larkin, *Silent Presence: Discernment as Process and Problem*

Spiritual Direction (Mentoring, Spiritual Friendship)

Thomas Merton, What is Spiritual Direction?

Kenneth Leach, *Soul Friend*

Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening*

William A. Barry, William Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*

William Barry, *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God*

Timothy Jones, *Finding a Spiritual Friend*

Carolyn Gratton, *The Art of Spiritual Guidance*

Guidelines for Spiritual Direction

Morton Kelsey, *Companions on the Inner Way: The Art of Spiritual Guidance*

Gerald May, *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit: Psychiatric Dimensions of Spiritual Direction*

Tilden Edwards, *Spiritual Friend*

Spiritual Director, Spiritual Companion: Guide to Tending the Soul

Janet Ruffing, *Uncovering Stories of Faith: Spiritual Direction and Narrative*

Kathy Kalina, *Midwife for Souls: Spiritual Care for the Dying*

Janet Hagberg & Robert Guelich, *The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith*

Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*

Ministry and Spirituality

Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*

Working the Angles

Alan Jones, *Sacrifice and Delight*
Henri Nouwen, *Creative Ministry*
H.B. London, Neil Wiseman, *Pastors at Risk*
Anthony Headley, *Achieving Balance in Ministry*
Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life.*

Personality and the Spiritual Life

Christopher Bryant, *Prayer and Different Types of People*
Bruch Duncan, *Pray Your Way.*
Grant and Clarke, *From Image to Likeness.*
Gary Harbaugh, *God's Gifted People*
Reginald Johnson, *Your Personality and the Spiritual Life.*
Michael, Chester and Norrisey, Marie C. *Prayer and Temperament*
Roy Oswald and Otto Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership..*
Mark Pearson, *Why Can't I Be Me?*
Corrine Ware, *Discovering Your Spiritual Type*

Spiritual Gifts

Gary Harbaugh, *God's Gifted People: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual and Personal Gifts*
Donald Hohensee, allen Odell, *Your Spiritual Gifts*
Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, *Gifts of the Spirit*
Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit*
Jane Kise, *Lifekeys*

Retreat Leading

Ruben Job, Norm Shawchuck, *How to Conduct a Spiritual Life Retreat*
Ruben Job, *Spiritual Life in the Congregation: A Guide for Retreats*
Jane Vennard, *Be Still: Designing and Leading Contemplative Retreats*